

~~33-35~~ (New) The method of claim 17, wherein said composition comprises a bacterial strain which expresses said LCO.

Al ~~34~~ ³⁶ (New) The method of claim 35, wherein said bacterial strain is a rhizobial strain.--

Please amend the claims as shown in the attached consolidated claim set.

REMARKS

A new abstract page is supplied to conform to that appearing on the publication page of the WIPO application, but the new Abstract is typed on a separate page as required by U.S. practice.

Applicants respectfully request that the preliminary amendment described herein be entered into the record prior to calculation of the filing fee and prior to examination and consideration of the above-identified application.

Claims 1-21, 26-32 and 35-36 are now pending in the case.

In essence, use claims 1-21 have been replaced by method claims. Further, the claims with multiple-dependencies have been replaced by singly-dependending claims. Support for these amendments can be found in the claims as initially filed, as well as throughout the disclosure. Further support can be found, for example, at page 6, lines 4-15; page 8, lines 3-14; page 13, line 27 to page 14, line 3; and Examples 9 and 10. Further support for new claims 35 and 36 can be found, for example, at page 10, lines 23-25; page 12, line 27 to page 13, line 2; and page 8, lines 1-3.

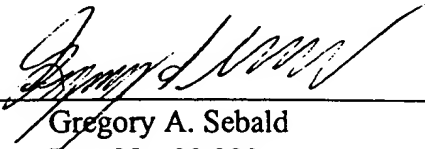
If a telephone conference would be helpful in resolving any issues concerning this communication, please contact Applicants' primary attorney-of record, Gregory A. Sebald (Reg. No. 33,280), at 612.336.4728.

Respectfully submitted,

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By



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GAS/vh